

Spring Mill State Park Collection

L225
1864-1938
1 mss. box

Rare Books and Manuscripts Division
Indiana State Library

Processed by: Elizabeth M. Wilkinson, June 2004
Finding aid revised by: Bethany Fiechter, 2015/10/30

Organizational Note:

The history of Spring Mill State park goes back to the early 1800s. Samuel Jackson, perhaps a Canadian volunteer in the War of 1812, was the first to operate a gristmill in the village from 1814-1817. Jackson sold his property to land developers from Kentucky, Cuthbert and Thomas Bullitt. The Bullitt brothers constructed the gristmill that is currently standing in the park today. The Bullitts sold their property to William and Joseph Montgomery from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1824. The Montgomery's made several improvements to the village which included a tavern, distillery, and a sawmill before selling in 1832 to the Hamer brothers, Hugh and Thomas, of New York. During the Montgomery's tenure, the village name was officially made Spring Mill on 31 January 1831.

The Hamers owned the village during its peak years, the 1850s, and as it fell into decline after the Civil War. The village began to lose a significant number of people to the nearby growing town of Mitchell Crossing, now Mitchell, after it was established in 1859. Hugh Hamer died in 1872 and ownership of the Village passed to his son Robert. Robert made an attempt at being a miller for several years, but ended up leasing the mill and other establishments to Jonathan Turley in 1881. Turley in turn went into a partnership with Solomon Scott in the distillery business, and also renamed the village Daisy Spring Mills in hopes of revitalizing its image. Turley added a steam turbine to the gristmill, but it was still only running in season and most of the shops remained closed. At some point Turley became the owner of the village in the 1880s.

In 1892 much of the village was sold to the Lehigh Portland Cement Company due to rough economic times. Jonathan Turley did however continue to run the distillery until his death in 1896. After Turley's death two of his daughters, Sarah and Eliza, continued to live in the family home for nearly thirty more years, but most of the community had abandoned Daisy Spring Mills for Mitchell.

George Donaldson, of Scotland, is also of note during this time period because he purchased roughly 181 acres of land from Spring Mill residents in 1865. Donaldson later returned to Scotland in 1897, but because he never became a U.S. citizen, his lands

reverted to the state of Indiana. Indiana University took possession of these lands and held them until 1928.

In the 1920s Indiana was creating a statewide park system headed by Richard Lieber. Lieber was dedicated to historic preservation as well as to preserving green spaces. He felt that Spring Mill was suited to both efforts. The restoration of the pioneer village began in 1928 and the park opened officially in 1930. Reconstruction and renovation of other building continued for many years. Today Spring Mill State Park is one of the most popular places to visit in Indiana.

Sources:

Ansari, Mohammed S. A History of Spring Mill Village. Bloomington, IN, 1985.

Patrick, Randy R. and Linda L. Patrick. Hiking Indiana #4 Spring Mill State Park. Roachdale, IN: Memories Forever Books, 1999.

Scope and Content Note:

The items in this collection consist of materials related to Spring Mill State Park in some form or fashion. Included here is a scant amount of correspondence, an inventory for the Park, exhibit labels, donated items, and a blueprint for a sign.

Folder Listing:

Folder

1. Paper money, 1864-1923.
 2. Inventory, 1931.
 3. Correspondence, 1938.
 4. Blueprint, 1930s.
 5. Exhibit labels, undated.
 6. Notebook, undated
-

Collection Information:

<i>Size of Collection:</i>	1 manuscript box
<i>Collection Dates:</i>	1864-1938
<i>Provenance:</i>	Indiana State Museum, May 1970
<i>Access:</i>	This collection is open for research.
<i>Restrictions:</i>	None
<i>Reproduction Rights:</i>	Permission to reproduce, exhibit, or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Manuscript Section, Indiana State Library. Possession of a reproduction from an Indiana State Library collection does not constitute permission for use.
<i>Language</i>	Materials are entirely in English

Alternate Formats: None

Related Holdings:

Notes:
